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some history of my Ford Ranchero

by Chris Watson

I've been driving my 1965 Ford Falcon Ranchero since 1977. Often I would tear it up from abuse or neglect, and my dad would fix it again and again. He put a new engine in it, had the front end rebuilt, replaced fenders and doors, repaired the clutch and linkage, replaced the transmission, and in the 1990s he put in a red seat, matching door panels and armrests from a later model Ranchero to replace the tattered seat and no door panels in the car. For many years before that I drove around sitting on a square piece of plywood over the bare springs and torn foam of the original seat.

Back in the 1980s the junkyards were full of Ford Falcons, and parts were plentiful and cheaply available. When I ran the passenger door along a guardrail, for example, it was easier for my dad to get another door from the junkyard than to fix the one that I screwed up. One time he put a replacement hood on. He put it down and told me the car was good to go, or something to that effect. I drove off, but as soon as I got around the corner from the house the hood flew up. It hadn't latched properly, and the corners by the hinges bent up like dog-eared pages in a well-worn book. I felt really bad, but he wasn't mad at me. He hammered them back down, and eventually replaced that hood with one that wasn't dog-eared.

In the mid-1990s my dad stripped all the paint off, filling his garage with noxious fumes, and had the car painted. He saved money by doing most of the prep work himself, including the removal of the bumpers, lights and grille. Before the paint job the car had a green hood, a blue door, a gray fender, etc. Afterwards everything matched, and it was all the correct color: Wimbledon White.

Since then the car has been repainted, but not the correct shade of white. It will be Wimbledon White again as soon as possible. The interior is now stock, but is black. It will be Ivy Gold again as soon as possible. I'm working on it.

[Tragedy at the Reno Air Races](#), details of a trip Ranchero made in September 1999

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